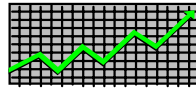


HAVING THE SAME COUNSELOR FROM REHABILITATION TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

How Does it Impact Vocational Rehabilitation and
Employment Participants' Employment Outcome?

Bringing the
“Voice of the Customer”
into Decision-making



Surveys and Research Staff
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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to show how keeping the same counselor from the rehabilitation phase to the employment services phase of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program impacts respondents' satisfaction with their current job. The charts in this report compare responses to selected questions dealing with job satisfaction by the continuity of the counselor assisting the respondent. There are four possible categorizations for the counselor which the respondents had during the employment services phase. These are as follows:

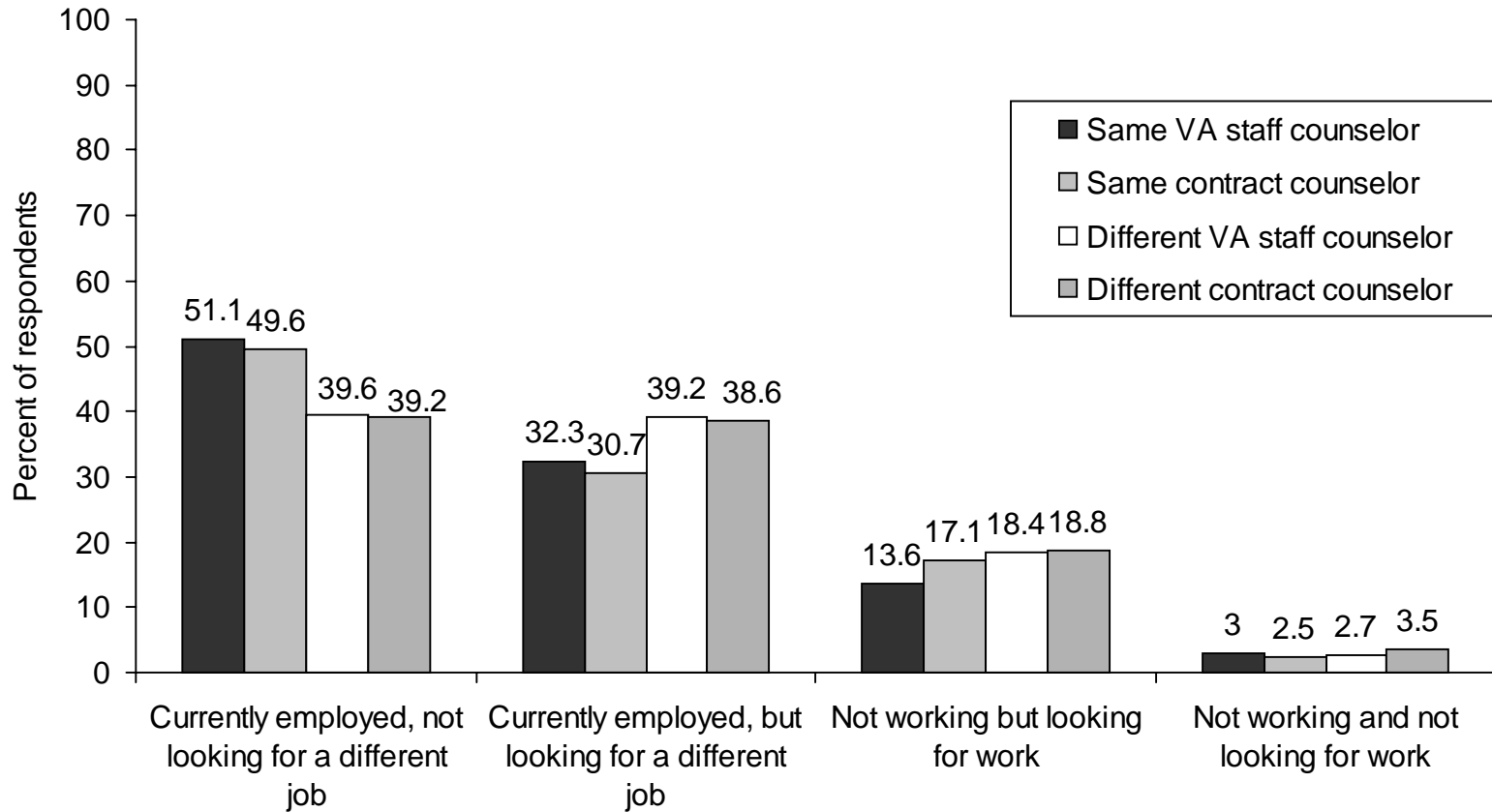
- 1) the same VA staff counselor who assisted them during their rehabilitation phase
- 2) the same contract counselor who assisted them during their rehabilitation phase
- 3) a different VA staff counselor from the one who assisted them during their rehabilitation phase
- 4) a different contract counselor from the one who assisted them during their rehabilitation phase.

(Note: it is not possible to determine from the data what type of counselor was assigned in the rehabilitation phase for those who had a different type of counselor for their employment services phase.)

Even though all possible categories are shown in these charts to provide a greater level of detail, it will become clear that the differences between VA staff counselors and contract counselors are not significant. Instead, it is the differences that exist between those who were able to keep the same counselor from rehabilitation through the end of the program and those who were transferred to a different counselor that are noteworthy. The following charts show that it is having the same counselor during their training and their search for employment that makes a difference in the respondent's satisfaction with their job.

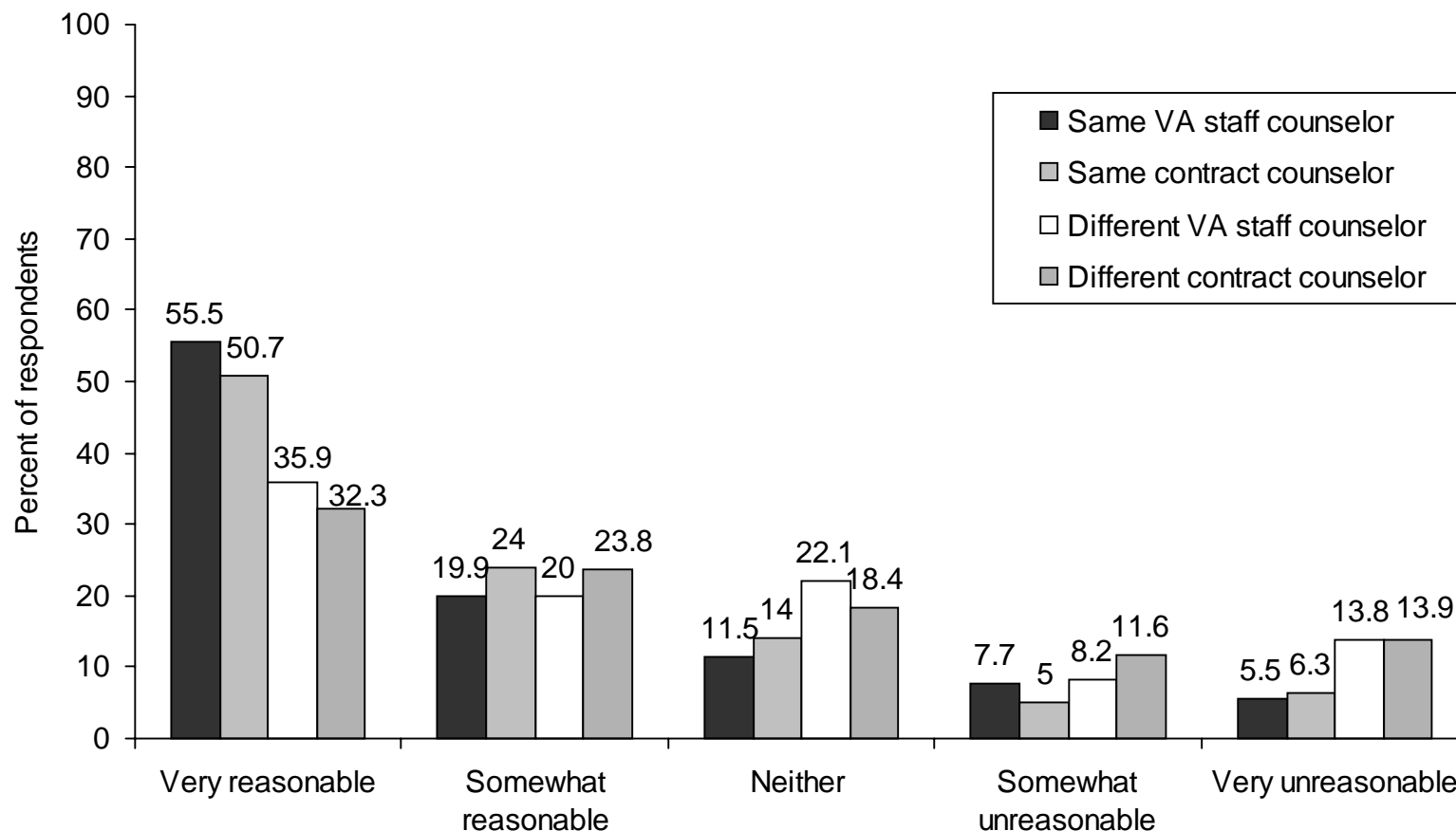
Data for this report come from the 1999 "Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction with VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Program".

What is your current employment status?



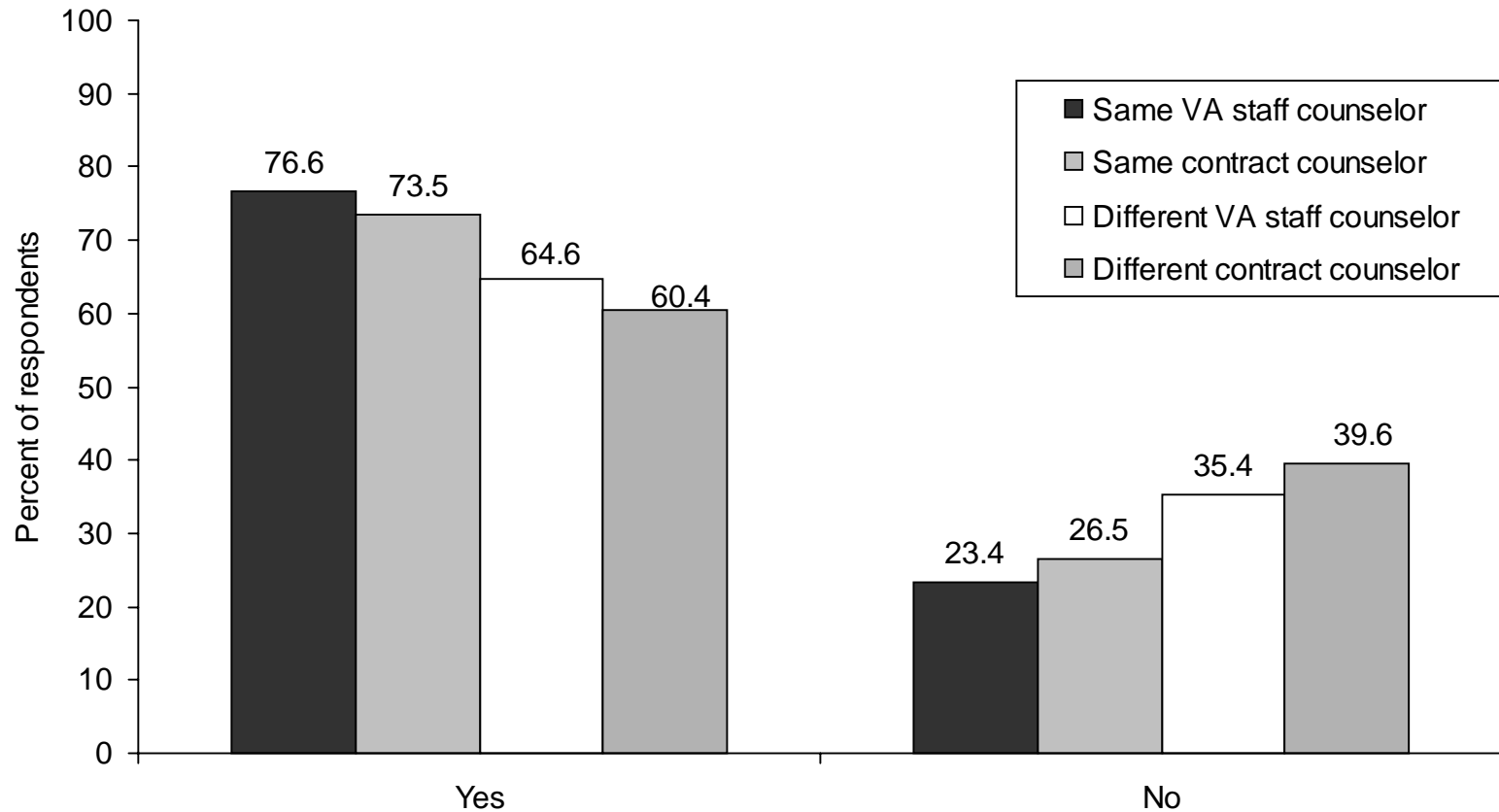
There is a significant difference in employment status between respondents who have kept the same counselor from their rehabilitation phase on and those who were assigned to a different counselor for the employment services phase. It seems that respondents who had the same counselor have a higher percentage of satisfactory employment (employed, not looking for a different job) than respondents who had a different counselor. Half of those with the same VA staff or contract counselors (51.1 percent and 49.6 percent respectively) reported being employed and not looking for a different job, vs. only 39.6 percent and 39.2 percent of those who had a different VA staff or contract counselor.

How reasonable was the length of time it took you to find a job?



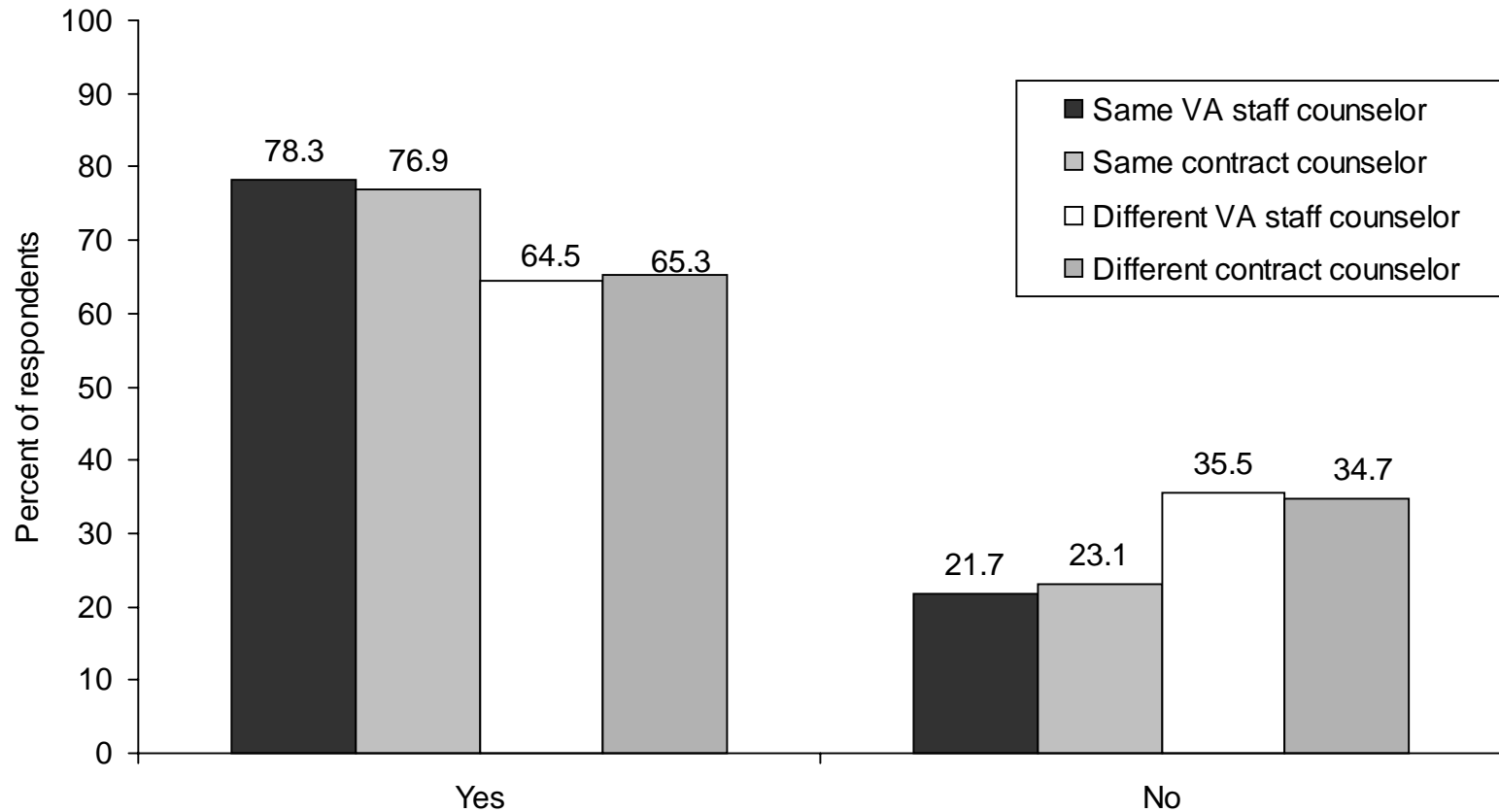
There was a significant difference between those who kept the same counselor from rehabilitation on and those who were assigned to a different counselor in the percentage of respondents who felt the length of time it took to find a job was **very reasonable**. This is true for both VA staff counselors (55.5 percent for same one vs. 35.9 percent for a different one), or contract counselors (50.7 percent for same one vs. 32.3 percent for different one). At the other end of the spectrum, over twice as many of those who had a different counselor thought the length of time to find a job was very unreasonable (roughly 14 percent) vs. those who kept the same counselor (roughly 6 percent).

Does this job meet your rehabilitation needs?



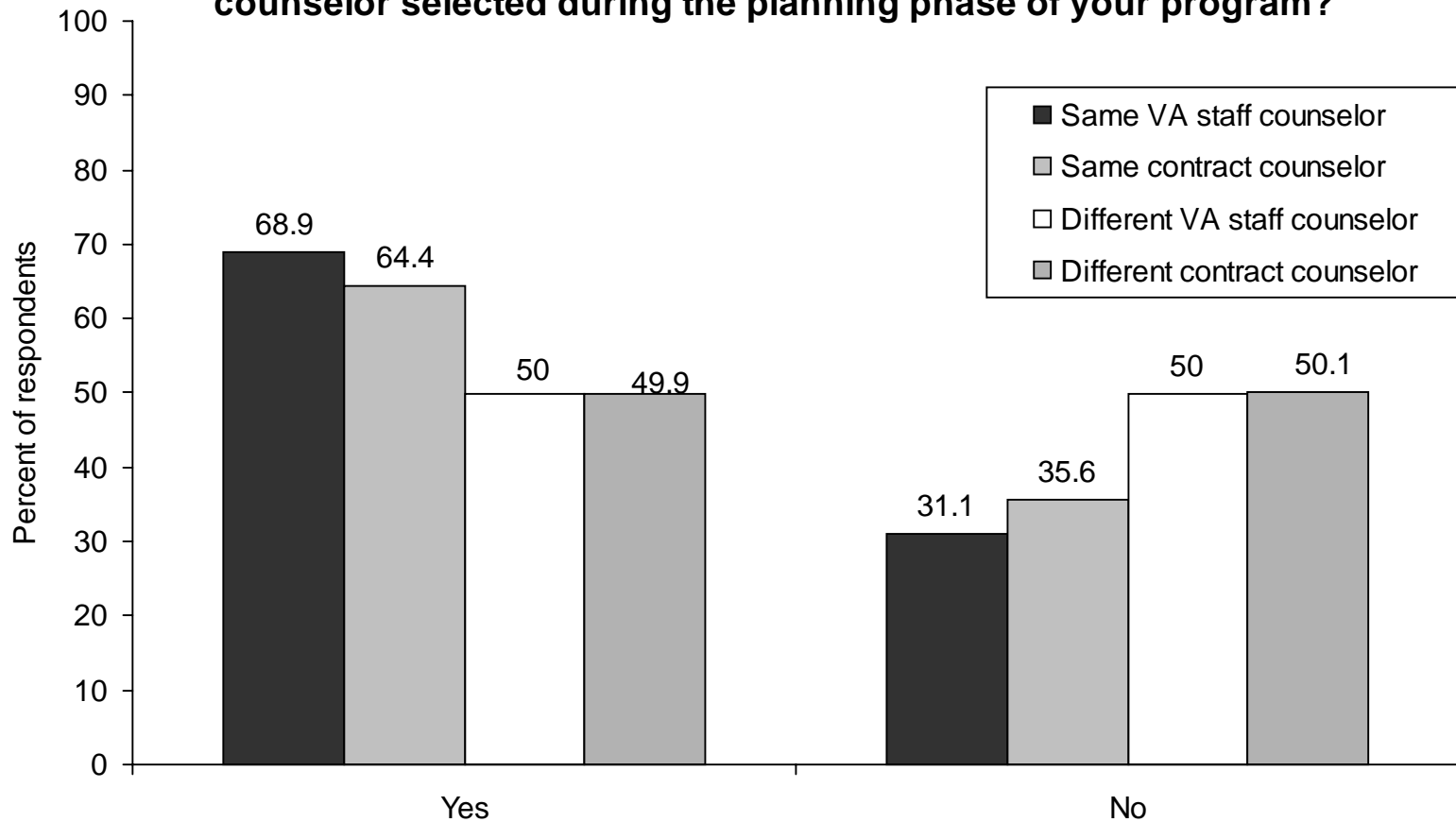
There was also a significant difference between those who kept the same counselor and those who didn't in the percentage of respondents who felt their job met their rehabilitation needs. Over three-quarters of those who had the same VA staff counselor from rehabilitation through employment services felt the job met their rehabilitation needs compared to 64.6 percent of those who had a different VA staff counselor. Likewise, 73.5 percent of those who had the same contract counselor thought their job met their rehabilitation needs compared to only 60.4 percent of those who had different contract counselors for the rehabilitation and employment services phases.

Does this job suit your skills and abilities?



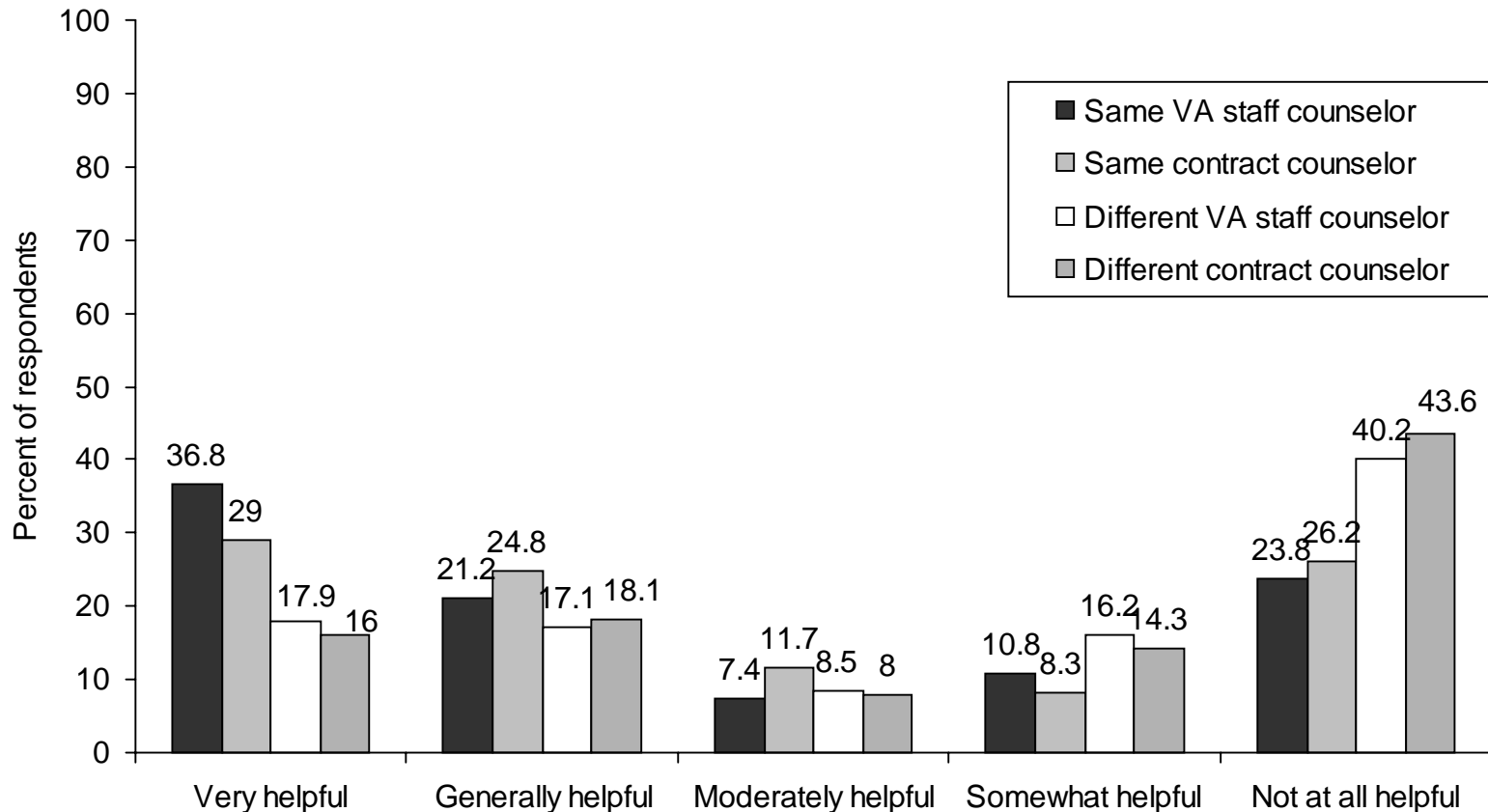
It appears that having the same counselor from rehabilitation through employment services also helps VR&E participants find jobs that better suit their skills and abilities than when they have different counselors. Over three-quarters of those who had the same counselor from rehabilitation to employment services, whether it be a VA staff counselor (78.3 percent) or a contract counselor (76.9 percent), thought their job suited their skills and abilities compared to roughly 65 percent for those having different counselors.

Does this job match the occupational/vocational goal you and your counselor selected during the planning phase of your program?



There was also a significant difference between those who had the same counselor and those who didn't in the percentage of respondents who thought their job matched the occupational/vocational goal which they selected with the help of their counselor during the planning phase. For those who kept the same counselor from the rehabilitation phase through completion of the program, 68.9 of those with VA staff counselors and 64.4 percent of those with contract counselors thought the job matched their goal. For those with different counselors assisting them, only half (50 percent of those with VA staff counselors and 49.9 of those with contract counselors) thought the job matched their goal.

How helpful was your employment specialist/counselor in helping you find your current job? (of those who needed help)



There is a significant difference between those who kept the same counselor and those who had a different counselor in the percentage of respondents who thought their employment specialist/counselor was very helpful in finding them their current job, whether it be for a VA staff counselor (36.8 percent for same one vs. 17.9 for a different one) or a contract counselor (29 percent for same one vs. 16 percent for a different one). There is also a significantly higher percentage of those who had different counselors who thought their counselor was not at all helpful in finding them a job (40.2 percent of those with a different VA staff counselor vs. 23.8 percent of those with same one and 43.6 percent of those with a different contract counselor vs. 26.2 percent of those with same one).